FALL CARE FOR HIBISCUS - Barling's Nursery

By now I'm sure you have been giving your planted hibiscus some preparatory care for the months to come, such as reducing your fertilizer formula to 2-10-10 or 0-10-10 or such which has been available at your source of supply. This will strengthen the root system and harden the wood as well as being beneficial in producing large specimen blooms for competition.

If you have 0-10-10 or such it is worth while to continue to fertilize your plants every other month through the winter as they can stand a little nourishment and will jump more actively comes spring.

Now, take a real good look at your plants. Has the foliage got good color, or is it on the washed out side and not too healthy? If so, it is possible that your fertilizer has not had adequate secondary or trace elements. Therefore, it is in good order to take care of this deficiency now. There are a number of commercial compounds on the market, one of which is Minorel Concentrate No. 3086. Since the word is trace, be no more generous than the table suggests. Usually one teaspoon to 10 gallons of water in 10 day intervals. Two or three applications should show a marked change in your leaf color.

If you have used a mulch during the hot weather, when the temperature gets to a comfortable point, pull out this mulch and break up the ground around the plant so the soil is aerated. If the mulch is kept through the winter it is a good home for unwanted pests to bed down in and always a chance of fungus rot out at the base of your plants.

As the trees start to shed leaves and the grass and annuals start to go back for the winter, it is best to keep a sharp eye on the underside of the foliage, since your plants look more delectable to the snails, slugs, aphis, ets., and will try to set up housekeeping. Get out the spray gun and give them a fit every other week.

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FALL (Cont't)

When your plants, with cool nights and warm days, start to show a lot of yellow leaves, take a pail or basket and pick them off. It makes the plants look better, and it doesn't help the plant to have them collect and rot at the base of the plants.

Now is the time, if your plants are tagged, to check the tags. It will save a lot of confusion in the spring when your mind is rusty as to what plant is where.

The problem of cold protection for your hibiscus varies so greatly with the area in which you live and where the plants are on your property, that it is almost impossible to cover all our problems briefly. In general, if you can not cover your plants completely with added heat underneath, just don't cover at all. Water well and deep before the cold, but not immediately after. For general protection bank up with dirt well above the graft before the cold hits with a flat top instead of a cone. Warmth comes with the depth and width of the soil. It's work, but if an unusual long period of warmth follows your banking, knock it down and do again when the next cold is about to strike. Any shield on the north and west sides of plants is helpful to bounce off cold winds. As far as sprinklers are concerned, some are for and some against. If it's only frost which normally starts to form about sunrise, put on the sprinklers before the frost starts and leave on until the frost burns off the grass. If it's all out cold and freezing, large plants under heavy ice will badly break down since the sprinklers would have to be put on when the temperature hits 32° or lower and be kept on until the thermometer reads 35° or better. Once again, this is up to the individual to gamble with.

If course the best bet is to cover your house and entire yard with plastic and with a few thousand dollars for steam heat you will have it made.

Bye now,
Burt